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INTERNATIONAL MILITARY COMMITMENT: A  
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

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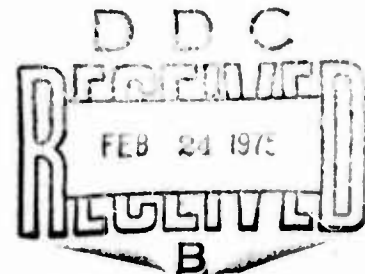
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## INTRODUCTION

This paper is the first in a series which will describe the development of a systematic and empirical procedure for keeping account of international activities which raise the likelihood that one nation will come to the defense of another. In particular the concern here is to provide a conceptual framework to help guide the development of an analytical technique for identifying, measuring, and monitoring international commitments, where the use of force is implied. The underlying assumption of this work is that while it is very difficult to predict particular foreign policy decisions, many of the conditions which influence decisions can be observed and monitored. Among the most important conditions which influence foreign policy decisions are the dependencies, obligations, and commitments which exist among nations. This study focuses on the concept and activity of international commitment.

There is rich, but underdeveloped literature on commitment phenomena in the social sciences, and the analyst concerned with international commitments recognizes that there are few procedures available to him for providing valid and reliable measurements of the direction and relative intensity of various international obligations. "Who is committed to whom and to what degree" are, for example, questions for which only tentative and not very well supported answers can be given. As one foreign policy analyst recently noted, "there is widespread uncertainty about the meaning of the concept" (Weinstein, 1969). This uncertainty can be attributed mainly to the fact that there is no general theory for international commitment even though commitments are considered to be fundamental characteristics of international politics (Liska, 1962; Modelski, 1963; and Morgenthau, 1973).

Since the study of commitment is underdeveloped, commitment research needs to be directed toward basic needs. One of the most important of these is the provision of operational definitions of commitment indicators. On the following pages some of the most frequent observations and assumptions about commitment phenomena found in social science and international relations policy literature are presented. These assumptions have been integrated into the operational definition of international commitment provided at the conclusion of this report.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND THREATS

Commitments in the form of alliances and other arrangements have received special attention as products of threat situations wherein nations with mutual interests join together for common defense (K.J. Holsti, 1967; Weinstein, 1969). This predominate view of international commitment considers that commitments among nations are defined in terms of threats to national interests. Commitments from this perspective are specific, temporary, and completely dependent upon the evaluation of particular national goals and interests. National actors create commitments which they believe will promote their specific national interests when adverse conditions exist which might otherwise restrict them from achieving those interests.

The pervasiveness of this proposition in the international relations lore makes it essential that the relationship between threats and commitments be recognized explicitly. The French, for example, base their military policy, in part, on the consideration that a commonly perceived threat is the main reason for a coalition strategy. A recent FRENCH WHITE PAPER notes that "the existence of a clearly asserted threat" which is sensed publicly "would bring about an indispensable rush of solidarity in which all interests would be merged," but without that threat as in the case of improved U.S.--Soviet relations vis a vis France "a military coalition policy is of itself a contradiction" (1972, p.9).

A recent defense statement by the British supports this same notion that international threats and especially the Soviet threat provide the reason for the Western alliance (Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1973), and Deputy Secretary of State Rush has explained very clearly that American commitment policy is designed around perceived threats. American decision makers, according to Rush, "have viewed our commitments chiefly in military terms--most recently, in terms of the threat to our interest posed by the Soviet Union and by Communist China" (1973, p.1). One analyst has summarized this view of the threat commitment relationship by declaring that the formation of alliances "requires no common condition, value or goal except the single one of perceived threat." (Balden, 1970, p.124).

The reason for the dominance of this foreign policy proposition is easy to explain. Threat situations have within them the potential for ruin. Threats act as "triggers" or "break-points" in international politics, and they have the force to change routine and relaxed periods into intense and contracted states-of-affairs (McClelland, November, 1973). This fear of ruin very often leads

decision-makers to seek preventive and defensive mechanisms--one of which is alignment. National decision-makers may not always seek alignment when threatened, but very often they do. Critical questions for empirical research are then how and when do changing threat situations affect established and new commitment patterns? (McClelland, January, 1974)

In order to test for this relationship as well as some of the many propositions that are extant about international commitments (see, for example, the Holsti, Hapmann, and Sullivan, 1974 study on alliance), a more rigorous understanding of the concept of commitment is needed than is now available. Perhaps the most important assumption essential to using this concept in research is that while commitment and threat have been linked together in the literature the analyst must be careful to recognize that they are conceptually independent. Threats themselves neither describe nor explain completely the motivations for, or the existence of commitment ties. Nations indeed may also join together to form a "winning coalition" or because they sense an importance of common national attributes whether that be governmental type, ideology, or culture. Furthermore, commitments themselves may create perceived threats where none existed before or intensify them greatly as many post-war revisionist writers and Soviet analysts (Welch, 1959), have suggested about American containment policy toward the Soviet Union and China. The importance of commitment as an independent or dependent variable for analysis makes it essential, therefore, that it be defined operationally independent of the concept of threat.

Commitment as a response to a particular threat provides only a partial explanation for the concept. In addition to being a response to protecting specific national interests, a "commitment may itself become the main reason for a nation's action." (Weinstein, p.43). In this case, the fulfillment of a commitment is more important as a demonstration of will or principle than it is an act of protecting the interest for which it originally was created. Moral, prestige, monetary or other values and interests independent of the original threatened national interest may become involved in a commitment relationship.

When commitments themselves become the main reason for action the actor becomes locked into consistent behavior patterns which can last for relatively long periods of time. Commitments under these conditions tend to continue on the basis that inconsistent behavior will result in negative penalties to the actor. As will be shown, the empirical



manifestations of these aspects of commitment described above can be accounted for.

#### INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT AND CHANGE

While the study of international commitments has been a traditional concern of policy analysts, the need for reliable and accurate analysis is especially critical today. A view of the political relations among nations accepted by many foreign policy observers and analysts is that the late 1970's and 1980's will be a period of very active change and adjustment (Sprout and Sprout, 1971; IISS, 1972; and Donaldson, March 25, 1974). Oil politics, detente, arms negotiations, European and Japanese post-war revival, the ending of bi-polar policies, and uncertain international economic conditions have already made foreign policy in the 1970's very different from the previous two decades.

The need to better understand the changing international environment has resulted in a growing interest in the reevaluation of a number of concepts which relate directly to international commitment. One of the most important is, of course, the concept and policy of nuclear deterrence. Recent articles (George and Smoke, 1974; Greenwood and Nacht, 1974; and Ikle, 1973) and American policy decisions (Secretary of State Schlesinger, January 10, 1974) record a real concern that deterrence mechanisms of the 1950's and 1960's may not be as reliable in the 1970's and beyond as what may have been hoped for. This renewed interest in deterrence strategy is not limited to hardware considerations. Important questions now under study include the meaning of international commitment. Who is committed to whom and the strength of commitments are substantial aspects of any deterrence policy. In a changing environment assurances made in the past may or may not continue to be relevant and effective. New associative arrangements may be developing or needed. The accounting of any change in international commitment ties is essential for all parties involved in a deterrence situation, and this is especially true in periods of change and adjustment.

Techniques of foreign policy influence have never been well understood, but one could argue that in the 1950's and 1960's global conditions were such that a degree of control over foreign policy behavior had been effected -- if only crudely and at a very basic level. A nuclear weapons duopoly by the United States and the Soviet Union and a less resource-dependent world permitted the two "super powers" to maintain apparently effective deterrent threats against each

other while giving them a superordinate position over other members of the system. The economic and military size of the American and Soviet nations created, in part, an image of relative international control, stability, and predictability. That picture is rapidly fading.

The Vietnam war and the oil crisis of 1973-74 mark major shifts in global politics. The Vietnam war provided insight into the weakness of major nations and their ability to influence other major states, and the oil crises confirmed it. One central reason why the United States could not end the Vietnam war quickly with its military might was the fear that escalation of the war might also escalate Soviet or Chinese involvement. Apparently United States decision-makers believed that they could not both "win" or even "settle" the war and dissuade America's major adversaries from direct involvement in the war at the same time. Furthermore, United States commitments, especially as they related to American deterrence policy, were viewed as interdependent and withdrawal from Vietnam was complicated by a fear that American adversaries and allies would no longer believe in the credibility of United States international promises and obligations if it withdrew without settlement or victory. The Vietnam war demonstrated the complexity of threat/commitment conditions.

The experience of Vietnam and other cases raises the question of the applicability of some of the assumptions upon which American political/military policy is based. George and Smoke suggest, for example, that some of the assumptions associated with American prescriptive deterrence theory are oversimplified. They question the assumptions that international commitments are interdependent and homogeneous, and point out that their studies show American commitments to vary "substantially from one case to another." Especially important to George and Smoke is the observation that commitments are "context dependent," and therefore, they are subject to change. In some cases, Korea in 1950 for example, the strength of the American commitment increased "overnight".

The oil crisis is another example of the importance of changing influence processes in global politics. Industrial, "green revolution," and all other modernizing nations are energy dependent, and energy is a very scarce and unequally distributed resource. Prior to the oil embargo most analysts concentrated on the Soviet threat, the Chinese threat, the international financial threat, and other national threat problems. Even though it was recognized widely before October, 1973 that an oil shortage was imminent, there



appeared to be very little serious concern among upper level officialdom over a major energy crisis for the year 1973. When that threat finally was recognized not only were national systems unprepared for it, but traditional international expectations and arrangements were unexpectedly challenged.

The October, 1973 Middle East war itself strained U.S.-Western European relations, particularly over the concept of global (USA) versus regional (Western Europe) security interests. But the main impact on international politics was a result of the following Arab oil embargo. The early attempt to seek self-protection in almost complete disregard to cooperative efforts was evidenced particularly in the behavior of Japan, France, and England (IISS, 1974 p.33). The foreign policies of many nations--industrialized and not--clearly shifted gears, and a new arrangement of threat priorities and perhaps assurance arrangements emerged.

It now seems evident that the post World War II period when threat and commitment arrangements appeared to be relatively straight-forward has been terminated. The process has been gradual, but events like the Vietnam war and the oil crisis have provided the practical evidence of the shift. The implication for analysts is that there is a real need to bring forward the concepts, models, and analytical techniques necessary to cope with new conditions. One of the most important considerations is the variable of change itself, and to contend with this variable requires procedures that emphasize monitoring as well as analysis. International commitments are dynamic, and in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of these phenomena they must be examined in light of their change sequences.

In the next section, the concept of international commitment is developed further with reference to relevant social-psychological research findings. The intent of this section is to locate the most essential assumptions necessary for an operational definition of international commitment. Following this review a definition is provided specifically for international commitments where the use of force is implied. The assumptions basic to the definition should be applicable, nevertheless, to more broadly conceived notions of commitment and obligation.

CONCEPTUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMITMENT: THE  
SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

Among the best work to date on the study of commitment is the research of a few sociologists and social-psychologists. Their work, while admittedly incomplete, provides a number of useful assumptions for developing an operational definition of the term. While this research has been directed toward questions somewhat different from those under study here, the insight gained from the analysis of individual behavior in social situations is applicable, nevertheless, to research on international commitment.

An important assumption in this literature is that commitment relationships are central to the motivation for social action. Rosabeth Kanter (1968), a sociologist involved in organizational research, refers to commitments as "the willingness of social actors to give their energy and loyalty to social systems." Commitments, in her view, attach "personality systems to social relations which are seen as self-expressive." Commitments may serve at least two purposes. First, they indicate the strength of supportive and obligatory social ties between units; and second, they indicate the degree of willingness to maintain a particular social relationship.

The social manifestation of a commitment according to Charles Kiesler and Joseph Sakumura (1966) is "a pledging or binding of the individual to behavioral acts." They suggest that "the effect of commitment is to make an ACT less changeable," and "the greater the commitment, the greater is the resistance to change." E. Abramson, ET AL (1958) offer that "commitment in general may be variously understood as (1) the heightening of the probability that an action will be undertaken, (2) an ordering of the likelihood of actions, or (3) a condition of heightened predictability of action;" and Howard Becker (1960) concludes that while the term commitment has been applied in a number of different ways, sociologists generally use the concept "to account for the fact that people engage in CONSISTENT LINES OF ACTIVITY."

Commitments from the social-psychological perspective are variable and they have empirical manifestations. Kiesler and Sakumura suggest, for example, that "the greater the commitment, the greater is the resistance to change," an hypothesis which has obvious and important implications in international relations. They offer five ways in which the degree of commitment may be increased and presumably measured. These include "(a) the number of acts performed by the subject; (b) the importance of the acts for the subject; (c) the explicitness of the act, for example, how public or otherwise unambiguous the act was; (d) the degree of

irrevocability of the act; (e) the degree of volition perceived by the subject in performing the act." While there has been insufficient testing (as well as inconsistent findings) to determine exactly how much influence each of these factors has on commitment relationships, there is enough evidence in social-psychological research to conclude that commitments as attachments to particular positions can be accounted for empirically. (Allen, 1965; Goodmanson and Glaudin, 1971; Hovland ET AL, 1957; Hoyt and Centers, 1972; Ritzer and Trice, 1969 and 1970).

How individuals are attached to a commitment relationship also has received considerable attention. Commitment attachments may be dependent upon both the considerations of rewards and penalties. Kanter (1968) suggests that three potentially independent major social system problems involve the commitment of actors. These are social control, group cohesiveness, and the continuation of an action system. According to this view actors may be committed to the maintenance of a social relationship, to control of the relationship, and/or to the solidarity of the participants in the relationship. Kanter suggests that each of these conditions may entail different types of commitment or perhaps they form a single dimension. They need not occur independently according to Kanter, and "systems with all three kinds of commitment, with total commitment, should be more successful in their maintenance than those without." Robert Stebbins (1970) identifies two main dimensions of commitment which he labels value commitment -- where subjectively defined rewards maintain or motivate the seeking of association; and continuance or forced commitment -- where penalties tend to keep individuals from switching away from an association.

George Ritzer and Harrison Trice have pointed out that the MEASUREMENT OF COMMITMENT TIES does not deal directly with HOW COMMITMENTS are created, and therefore, the separation of commitment into "value" and "continuance" dimensions is unnecessary when measuring degrees of commitment. While the dimensionalization provided by Stebbins is not well developed, and probably is inessential to the measurement of international commitment, dimensionalization does help to identify some important attributes of commitment relationships. Value commitments, according to Stebbins, "exist when individuals perceive the presence of subjectively defined rewards (or the absence of costs) associated with a particular position or social identity." A research interest in sociologically oriented studies is, for example, the degree of value commitment that personnel managers attach to their occupations and



organizations. Significant questions for research are whether or not the positive inducements of value commitments keep personnel managers from changing their occupations and organizations casually, and the effect that environmental change has on the maintenance, strengthening, or weakening of a commitment.

For international political research it can be assumed generally that most commitments created in response to particular threats are considered as acts taken to produce positive cost-benefit results. The creations of NATO, the signing of the several American bi-lateral mutual defense treaties, the deployment of the U.S. Seventh Fleet off Taiwan in 1950 after the outbreak of the Korean war, and similar activities, probably are all examples of situations for the U.S. where the concept of "value commitment" is applicable. In each case a commitment was created in support of particular threatened interests.

The identification of commitment activities based upon the assumption that rewards are associated with such activities is not, however, an easy task for international political analysis. There is insufficient knowledge available to explain how, when, and to what degree particular commitment activities can be associated with particular rewards, how rewards influence consistent behavioral activity, nor what actually constitutes a reward. The characteristic of commitment which assumes that certain activities and conditions FORCE consistent behavior may be more appropriate to international political analysis.

Continuance or forced commitments exist, according to Stebbins, when individuals feel constrained to change their attachments regardless of potential rewards for fear of the imminence of subjectively defined penalties. The essential feature of continuance commitments is the condition of side-bets which force behavior. Side-bets associate other originally independent interests to the behavior that commitments explain.

Becker (1960) in his especially noteworthy work on commitment theory has provided insight applicable to our needs here. Becker warns that the single intuitive assumption that consistent behavior identifies a commitment is inadequate. There is a need to specify characteristics of commitment "independent of the behavior commitment will serve to explain." One characteristic of commitment, independent of its behavioral manifestations, is the side-bet. When a committed party, involved directly in an action, pursues interests that originally were extraneous to

the action, that party has engaged in a side-bet.

If an interest is conceived of as a "stake" for remaining consistent, then inconsistency will be seen as a penalty rather than a feasible alternative. Thus, a side-bet can be an action consciously taken to increase the reliability of a commitment. Independent values are tied to the support relationship. The placing of troops in foreign areas to enhance a deterrent is an example of such a side-bet. The stationing of such troops acts as a stake to ensure action against anyone who would destroy the troops in the process of attacking an ally. As Schelling has noted with regard to the stationing of American troops in Europe, "the implicit argument was not that since we obviously would defend Europe we should demonstrate the fact by putting troops there. The reasoning was probably that, whether we wished to be or not, we could not fail to be involved if we had more troops being run over by the Soviet Army than we could afford to see defeated" (Schelling, 1966, p.47).

Even more interesting than the deliberate tying of independent interests to a commitment are situations where side-bets are made not by conscious decision, but by the condition of membership within a particular system of organization. The underlying assumption here is that acceptance of the organization's rules may force an actor to perform in accordance with the expectations of other members of the organization who give definition to these rules, however implicit they may be. Becker has provided some insight into such situations; we can highlight his point with some international relations references.

Situations of commitment arise when "generalized cultural expectations" constrain behavior. Here the condition is such that penalties are invoked when these expectations are violated. This is a difficult concept to work with, but foreign policy and strategic analysis will not find the conditions unfamiliar. The foreign policy literature is replete with notions of diplomatic obligation, prestige, credibility, national honor, and so on. Decision-makers are sensitive to these considerations. President Nixon, in his February 1970 foreign policy report to the Congress stated the following with regard to the American General Purpose Forces strategy: "Weakness on our part would be more provocative than continued U.S. strength, for it might encourage others to take dangerous risks, to resort to the illusion that military adventurism could succeed" (Nixon, 1970, p. 129). The President's statement implies more than a recognition of the value of military capabilities in international politics. It suggests that



other national leaders expect the United States to guard against "military adventurism;" the failure of the U.S. to act in accord with the expectation obviously will result in a penalty, presumably to the United States. The implication of the President's statement is that the United States (as well as other nations) acts in the international system according to general and implicit rules and expectations. These are applicable particularly to commitment relations. The decision not to implement a deterrent threat in support of an ally would provide a clear example of how such expectations can affect international behavior. Y. Harkabi, an Israeli General as well as a strategic theoretician, exploring such a situation, has noted the following:

Consideration must be given in such a calculation to the long-range injury inflicted on a country's reputation, the loss of international prestige should the deterrer fail to stand by his undertaking, and the effects on both allies and adversaries. The deterrer's allies may turn their backs on him should his support prove unreliable. The adversary may view the deterrer's retreat from his threat as encouragement to continue his pressure through additional encroachment and acts of aggression. Adherence to an original commitment to execute a threat is not only of direct value--depending on the importance of the subject to which the threat applies--but also of indirect and SYMBOLIC value since it reflects the character of the deterrer, his future actions, and his system of government.

Thus, not only are there generalized expectations, but these expectations may be associated with particular "images" of nation-states. Nations reflecting particular attributes are expected to act according to these attributes or lose "face". National decision-makers of a nation-state who extend their nation's support to other nations and create images and expectations of obligation commit their nations to a system of government (Harkabi, 1966, p. 20).

One other side-bet effect appears to be applicable in international relations. This mechanism is called "impersonal bureaucratic arrangements" by Becker. It pertains to the situation where a side-bet has been made as a result of a nation making a major material investment in another nation. The resulting circumstance is far different from the image and organizational expectation dependencies, but it nevertheless, involves costs. Once major investments are made by one nation in another, it becomes costly to lose



such investments. This consideration tends to reduce the likelihood that a nation will readily permit the loss of the investment. It appears not to matter whether this investment is based on governmental or nongovernmental involvement.

A policy statement made by a group of South Vietnamese Senators in the form of an open letter to United States Senator Mike Mansfield suggested such a condition. The image is set forth by members of the recipient rather than the committing nation. The South Vietnamese Senators, in urging continued United States bombing in Cambodia, justified in part their pleas on the consideration that to end the bombing activity might jeopardize past United States investment. The size of the previous investment itself is adequate reason to continue support. The Senators explained;

The August 15 deadline makes the Communists more hardheaded and increases their demands in Cambodia peace negotiations. It nullifies eight years of U.S. intervention in South Vietnam and makes the ultimate sacrifice of 45,000 American dead useless. The bombing cessation in Cambodia will put South Vietnam and Thailand in the peril of death (LOS ANGELES TIMES, August 12, 1973, p.1).

A major assumption in this paper is then that international commitment relationships which manifest side-bet characteristics can be accounted for. These are situations where an obligation to consistent behavior is based upon a side-bet condition where nonfulfillment of an obligation will result in an independent and heavy penalty to the commitor. When these conditions exist empirical evidence of commitment can be collected, and the relative intensity of commitment relationships can be measured.

#### CLARIFICATION ON THE CONCEPT OF INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT

The final major consideration to be presented about the concept of international commitment is that it is different from the concepts of alliance and alignment. The concept of alignment means simply associated interests, behaviors, and propinquity. Such conditions need little conceptual development, and can be measured directly and easily. Nations may align themselves either explicitly or implicitly in terms of third parties, and such coordination may occur with or without the benefits of a commitment (Sullivan, 1972). Commitments unlike alignments manifest the behavioral characteristics noted in the previous section, and,

therefore, international commitments can be made by a variety of activities. Formal military alliances are indeed indicators of commitment, but they are incomplete ones. In the case of the United States, for example, Robert Osgood has noted that formal alliances "account for only a fraction of the commitments of the United States," and that "as its commitments have expanded and the cohesion of its alliances has diminished, the United States has felt less need for, and seen less prospect of, obtaining prior agreement from its allies before using, or even deciding how to use, its armed forces" (Osgood, p. 4, 1968).

Osgood has suggested that alliances, military aid and assistance, basing rights, unilateral declarations of intentions, and even "official and unofficial words and actions" can all create "understandings and expectations" of commitments. Bruce Russett, in a pair of empirical analyses on the relationship between effective deterrence and types of international commitments, has suggested that political ties, large trade relations, and military assistance are important symbols of commitments--symbols that aid in making deterrent relationships between major powers and their pawns credible (Russett, 1963 and 1967).

Thomas Schelling has noted that international commitments are based upon both explicit and implicit (latent) policies and relations. Schelling offers the important insight not only that commitments between nations are more than formal agreements, but also that, in fact, they are PREDICTIONS. Relating this understanding to the United States, Schelling has observed: "We cannot have a clear policy for every contingency; there are too many contingencies and not enough hours in the day to work them all out in advance. If one had asked in October 1962 what American policy was for the contingency of a Communist Chinese effort to destroy the Indian Army, the only answer could have been a PREDICTION of what the American government WOULD decide to do in a contingency that probably had not been 'staffed out' in advance" (p. 53). Such predictions probably rely as much on "informal" commitments as on formal military pacts.

The question of the explicitness and even the legality of certain international commitments has been of special concern to some members of the United States Congress. The Vietnam War aroused this Congressional interest but the implications of international commitments go far beyond this one concern. It is useful to review some of the insights into international commitments that congressional investigations have produced.

On June 25, 1969 the United States Senate passed the so-called "national commitments" resolution which was in part an attempt to provide an "accurate definition of the term 'national commitment'" (GLOBAL DEFENSE, 1969, pp. 79-84). An interesting feature of this document (quoted in part below) is its attempt to outline specifically what can commit one nation (the United States in this case) to another.

Resolved, that a national commitment for the purpose of this resolution means the use of the armed forces on foreign territory, or a promise to assist a foreign country, government or people by the use of the armed forces or financial resources of the United States, either immediately or upon the happening of certain events, and that it is the sense of the Senate that a national commitment by the United States results only from affirmative action taken by the Legislative and Executive Branches of the United States Government by means of both Houses of Congress specifically providing for such commitment (GLOBAL DEFENSE, 1969, p. 79).

Definitions of commitment, such as the above, are not very operational, and members of the United States Senate have recognized, of course, the various functions of international commitments. They also have been aware that a variety of international actions can obligate nations to come to the defense of other nations. This was, in fact the concern that spurred their investigation of American commitments abroad. Stuart Symington, as Chairman of the Senate's Subcommittee on Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, summarized the point in the final report of the subcommittee when he said: "it is the day-to-day implementation of policy which frequently and sometimes almost imperceptibly provides the building blocks for future commitments" (Symington, 1970, p. 1). Symington noted further: "overseas bases, the presence of elements of United States armed forces, joint planning, joint exercises, or extensive military assistance programs represent to host governments more valid assurances of United States commitment than any treaty or agreement" (Symington, 1970, p. 20).

Clearly then, the formal military treaty is not a complete indicator of international commitment. The United States, for example, has international defense obligations which go far beyond its signed defense pacts. The lack of a formal defense agreement should not be interpreted to mean



that no commitment for military support exists between two nations who have other mutual interests and where commitments exist even if not recognized by a formal treaty. Dean Rusk in an August 25, 1966 speech made this point by saying, "No would-be aggressor should suppose that the absence of a defense treaty, Congressional declaration, or U.S. military presence grants immunity to aggression" (GLOBAL DEFENSE, 1969, p. 3).

An operational definition of international commitment should be based upon the recognition that there are specific and multiple behavioral activities which raise the expectation of international commitment, and these activities are more than simply the existence of an alliance and they are different from a condition of alignment. These activities occur over time and set precedents and, thus, expectations for future activity (Payne, 1970, p. 127).

Parchments, troops and launchers symbolize the super power's commitment, a pledge of honor which cannot fail to appear, to the other power, as an irrevocable commitment, more imperative than any calculation of rationality.

To manifest the importance of the stake, to form ties of HONOR, to insure popular EMOTION in case of aggression...--all these measures refer to the category of COMMITMENT (1973, p. 194).

Raymond Aron, Robert Osgood, Thomas Schelling, the Symington Committee Report, as well as the authors of GLOBAL DEFENSE among others, all stress the importance of multiple indicators of commitment. The sociologist Howard Becker agrees that singular types of commitment actions taken individually may be trivial, but that "taken together, (they may) constitute for the actor a series of side-bets of such magnitude that he finds himself unwilling to lose them" (Becker, 1960, p. 38). Roland Paul (1973), who acted as a counsel to Symington's Senate committee, has listed what he believes are the seven most important indicators of American commitment activity. These seven types are: the formal defense treaty, security agreements not ratified formally, unilateral and public policy declarations, the stationing of troops abroad, moral commitment, general mutual identifications, and accumulated policy investments. While these particular variables form only one POSSIBLE set of indicators they do show what indicators an international commitment monitor should probably track.

There has been no published report of the development

of a multiple indicator of international commitment as conceptualized here, there have been a few noteworthy attempts to construct indexes of alignment. Henry Teune and Sig Synnestvedt (1965) have developed and tested one such procedure. In their study, Teune and Synnestvedt collected data for 14 "candidates for indicators of alignment" between the United States and the Soviet Union and 119 target nations. In an effort to validate these indicators the authors tested to see which of these characteristics correlated best with the judgments of international relations experts on United States and Soviet alignments toward the 119 nations. Teune and Synnestvedt explain:

The twenty countries most closely aligned with the United States and the twenty most closely aligned with the Soviet Union by expert judgment were selected to reveal which of the behavioral or decision indicators most clearly indicated the degree of alignment (pp. 176-177).

The authors note that of all their variables military commitments, votes in the United Nations, diplomatic recognition patterns, diplomatic visits by heads of state and others, and to a somewhat lesser degree, economic aid correlated best with the judgments of alignment patterns made by the experts.

The analysis conducted by Teune and Synnestvedt led to the interesting conclusions that there are "two distinct categories of alignment indicators, the military and the diplomatic," and that relatively few indicators may be necessary to create an index for these alignment types. The researchers' use of expert opinion to corroborate their empirical findings is important. In a somewhat different manner, as will be explained in a later report, expert judgment of foreign policy analysts and policy makers are being used in this project to help select commitment indicators. Other notable findings from the Teune and Synnestvedt study were: (1) the U.S. largely does sign its treaties with nations it was judged aligned to, but it also signs treaties with nations aligned to the USSR, (2) cultural exchanges were not found to be associated strongly with judged alignment, (3) the U.S. is far more active internationally than the USSR, and (4) the U.S. is involved more intensely with the nations it is aligned closely with than was true for the Soviet Union. These findings led Teune and Synnestvedt to conclude that "alignment, perhaps, is a direct function of both the intent and the capability of a major power." (p. 181).

Patrick McGowan's (1968) study of the "issue-area" of African non-alignment provides another example of an exploratory attempt to develop an index of alignment. This time the main technical feature was the use of factor analysis to construct indexes of alignment from possible alignment indicators, including a 10 variable list of suggested measures of Communist-African world interaction (Good, 1964). McGowan experimented with unrotated as well as rotated factor dimensions, and he constructed factor score indexes for these. While McGowan's interpretation of his results is not applicable directly to our work, his attempt to rigorously define alignment indicators and demonstrate that underlying patterns of political ties can be identified empirically is germane. The use of correlational and factor analysis to measure the relationships among alignment indicators and the conceptual basis for such an approach are areas in need of considerable research.

The study by Ole Holsti, Terrence Hopmann, and John Sullivan (1973) on alliances has demonstrated clearly both the need for continuing research on international commitment topics, and the usefulness of such research. After an extensive review of the alliance literature the authors concluded that not only is there no general theory of alliances, but that most existing alliance propositions lack empirical support. They even noted that "it is not impossible to find contradictory propositions coexisting in the same sources." Holsti, Hopmann, and Sullivan did conduct a number of tests on alliance propositions, and while they did not attempt to develop a commitment index they demonstrated in a number of ways how alliance propositions could be tested empirically. One of their most interesting findings led to the suggestion "that in the presence of significant perceived threat, nations forming an alliance are led to seek a relationship of the highest commitment level." (p. 83).

This brings to a conclusion the review of literature on commitment to be presented in this paper. Why commitments are important for international political analysis should be obvious. Commitments in future conditions increase the probability of certain activities while reducing or closing off others. Commitments may be created with the perception that they will provide certain rewards in pursuit of particular policy interest, but once instituted, commitments limit foreign policy choice (Callahan, 1974). Commitments can be used to signal policy interests and positions (Lockhart, 1974), but because commitments can be "ambiguous, unpredictable, and subject to change" (George and Smoke, 1974) they need careful attention.



International Commitments are assumed to be an important aspect of post World War II deterrence policy, and to have affected and been affected by changes in the structure and process of international politics. A great many propositions exist to explain how commitments relate to international politics, but most of these lack adequate testing. In order to further develop international commitment theory and test the propositions that exist in the literature, commitment relations must be accounted for empirically, measured, and monitored over time. The assumptions which are presented in the next section should help to provide some of the sidelines necessary to develop empirical indicators of international commitment.

#### AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS WHEN THE USE OF FORCE IS IMPLIED

Any research on commitment should seek to provide limited but cumulative conceptual development. The investigation described here is not intended to develop a general theory of international commitment; but rather to demonstrate one approach toward operationally defining and measuring international commitments. The scope of this study's interest in international commitments is limited to those cases where the obligation implies that one nation will come to the military support of another nation. While it is impossible to predict perfectly future national decisions, the measurement of the relative propensity of a nation to militarily aid another should be practicable. In later papers a procedure for measuring international commitments based upon the following assumptions will be presented.

1. An international commitment is considered here to be an independent construct which can be theoretically related to others. For international studies this means that the association between international commitment and other international relations concepts such as threat, war, peace and so forth are empirical, and may be tested for and linked together in theoretical models. Commitment may be considered in research as either a dependent or independent variable.

2. The role of commitment in international politics may vary greatly from one case to another (George and Smoke) as well as from one period to another. Singer and Small (1968) have found, for example, that alliance aggregation and the onset of war were positively correlated in the 20th Century and negatively correlated in the 19th Century. How, when, and in which direction commitment relationships differ and

change are empirical questions.

Global commitments, of course, may be manifested in many ways. One important consideration is that while the most common view of global commitments is that they exist between nation-states, it is possible to demonstrate that commitment relationships also exist between non-state and state actors. The Communist Chinese, for example, very often promise to militarily support national groups that are not recognized nation-states. All global commitments, regardless of the actor or target composition, are important and need conceptual and empirical analysis; the relative importance of different types of organizations to global commitments will depend upon the period under study. Given these considerations and limited resources, only inter-state commitments are considered here at this time. This decision recognizes the contemporary condition that "the member states are so prominent in international society that it is logical to start the analysis with them" (Frankel, 1969, p. 7).

3. International commitments are sometimes defined in terms of specific threats to national interests. At this time the most valid and reliable empirical indicators of commitment probably are, however, those where a side-bet or forced behavior condition can be identified. Whatever the original reason for a commitment action, if there is no clear evidence that inconsistent behavior will result in a penalty to the actor then rigorous and comparative analyses of commitment obligations may not be possible.

The identification of a national interest and the linkage of that interest to a threat and even to a threat response which involves other nations are events different than a commitment relationship as understood here. International commitments are best described in terms of lines of action and not goals or objectives.

4. International commitment when viewed within the security issue area can be given full meaning only with multiple indicators. The complexity of the concept is not contained in any single indicator. A commitment index is then an appropriate measuring instrument for international commitment.

5. The component indicators of a commitment index must be variable, and consist of more than simple consistent behavior (Becker) or high interaction (McGowan). Important characteristics for identifying and measuring the intensity of commitments are: independent stakes, explicit or public



evidence, the degree of irrevocability, the degree of volition perceived by actor, the importance of the act to the actor, and the frequency of action by the actor (Allen; Becker; Hoyt and Centers; Kiesler and Sakumura).

6. Commitments are dynamic and they are created and extended as well as diminished by cumulative actions (Symington, Aron and Lockhart, 1974). Indicators of commitment must be monitored over time to establish their existence, degree of intensity, and propensity to change. Indicators of commitment and their actual use in commitment measurement should also be capable of indirectly accounting for the affect of intervening factors such as time which may heighten or lessen the likelihood that one nation will come to the defense of another.

Another intervening variable that may affect commitments are the human or psychological factors which may intercede to make an apparent commitment relationship non-operational or lead one nation to the support of another even when there are no clearly visible signs of commitment (Wolfers, 1959). Indicators which monitor the stated foreign policy positions of decision-makers may indirectly account for such conditions. There may be other intervening conditions which also affect the strength of a commitment relationship such as bureaucratic organization, organizational politics, the geographic distance between nations, political system compatibility, social and cultural similarity, etc. The analysis of the effect of these conditions on various commitment situations must be pursued before a general theory of international commitment can be offered.

7. The selection of commitment indicators for an index can be accomplished through the aid of a number of procedures including expert judgment and correlational and factor analysis. A number of different commitment indexes constructed with different variables, weightings, and so forth probably can be developed which will identify and pattern accurately international commitments. Some explanation of a procedure for measuring international commitments already has been reported on (Martin, 1974). A review of the approach for measuring international commitments followed in this project will be the topic of the next report.



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